

To provide safe educational environments for all students in Indiana, the Indiana General Assembly passed a law in 1999 to improve school safety. This statute required each school corporation to designate an individual to serve as the school safety specialist for the entire school district. The responsibilities of the school safety specialist include: 1) Coordinate the safety plans of each school in the school corporation as required under rules adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education; 2) Provide materials to assist a safe school committee in developing a plan for the school that addresses the issues of unsafe conditions, crime prevention, school violence, bullying, and other issues that prevent the maintenance of a safe school; 3) Assess and facilitate professional development needs for faculty and staff to implement methods that decrease problems identified above; 4) Act as a resource and trainer for other staff members in the school corporation on issues related to school safety, security, and discipline; 5) Serve on the county school safety commission; 6) Participate each year in school safety training provided by the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy.

The Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy has trained and certified over 1200 school safety specialists since 1999. Many school districts have sent all building principals to participate in the training. This Indiana Department of Education program remains the only such statutory school safety training program in the U.S.

The Academy has been honored and recognized by the USDOE on several occasions. The Academy training has been highlighted as an exemplary program at the OSDFS national conferences in 2002 and 2005. The ISSSA continues to be a one-of-a-kind school safety program in the United States and was highlighted by the Council of State Governments in San Francisco in July 2006.

The Academy website was recognized as one of the top five in the U.S. by the U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security in 2003 when they announced the new national website for terrorism preparedness in schools.

The Indiana Department of Education and the Academy were the first in the U.S. to develop school district trainers in tactical site surveys using the Jane's Safe Schools Planning Guide for all hazards. Nearly 80% of Indiana's school districts participated and also received Safety Plan Templates.